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Roy Rogers

Comics



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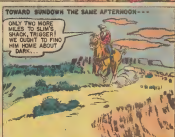
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---UNLESS HE'S DOWN IN
THIS DRY WASH! AND
HERE'S---TIRE TRACKS,
WITH A JEEP TREAD!



A WRECK---
WITH A BLOWN-
OUT FRONT
TIRE!



---AND THOSE TWO MEN
UNDER IT AREN'T MOVING!



DEAD--- BOTH OF THEM! MEN
IN CITY SLACKS! PROBABLY OUT
HERE HUNTING FOR GEM STONES!
BUT THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN
WHAT HAPPENED TO SLIM ...



OH! HARMONICA
MUSIC! SLIM, YOU
LOW-FACED NERVE-
JACK, COME OUT AND
SHOW YOURSELF!



OOOOOHEE IT, BOY! IT WAS
ALL PEACEFUL AND QUIET HERE
TILL YOU CAME ALONG! I WAS
JUST WAITING FOR DAVE TO GO
HOME TO SUPPER...



WHY?

WELL, BY DAVE I'D STAND A BETTER
CHANCE TO OODLE ANY MORE TRIGGER-
HAPPY GUDES IN JEeps THAT MIGHT
BE CRUISING AROUND.



THESE JOKERS JUST DROVE UP AND
ORDERED ME OFF MY HORSE! I MISTOOK
ME FOR SOMESBODY NAMED PIERCE OR
PRICE. ANYHOW, WHEN I WOULDN'T,
THEY SHOT POOR OLD BONEY---

AND THEN?





---SO YOU SEE, TOUGH CHARACTERS
...PROBABLY SPIES OF SOME FOR-
EIGN POWER--- ARE HUNTING
PRICE, TOO! AND HE LOOKS A
LOT LIKE YOU---



THE IMPORTANT THING,
SLIM, AS I SEE IT...
IS THAT THESE "TOUGH
CHARACTERS" HAVE
SOME HOTTER TIP
THAN WE'VE GOT ON
PRICE'S WHEREABOUTS.
THEY KNOW HE'S
HIDING IN THIS MESS
OF DESERT!



OKAY! I HAPPEN TO KNOW THIS
SECTION BETTER THAN THEY
DO! WE'LL FIND DR. PRICE, IF
HE'S FINDABLE...
AND FIND HIM FIRST!

WITH A
CRYSTAL
BALL?



WITH THIS TELESCOPE, MARSH!
WE'LL CLIMB TWIN BUTTES JUST
BEFORE SUNUP AND LOOK OVER
A FEW HUNDRED SQUARE MILES
OF LANDSCAPE. THAT'S ONE
THING THEY NEVER
THOUGHT OF!



AT SUNRISE---ON THE HIGHER PEAK OF THE
TWIN BUTTES.

SLIM! I SEE A FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE TRUCK...
IN A WASH TO THE NORTH...AND A SMALL
CAMPFIRE SMOKE!

UH-HUH! I SEE
SOMETHING ELSE!



I'VE BEEN STUDYING THOSE OLD,
FORGOTTEN MINE TUNNELS IN THE
SLOPE OF THE OTHER BUTTE! YOU
WOULDN'T NOTICE 'EM WITH YOUR
LITTLE POCKET GLASS, BUT
TAKE MINE---



THERE'S ONLY A COUPLE OF THE OLD ENTRANCES LEFT---ROCK-SLIDES HAVE BURIED THE OTHERS...
FOCUS ON THE ONE HALF-WAY UP
AND TO THE RIGHT.

I'VE GOT IT!
AND---SAY SLIM! THERE'S
A GRAY BURRO EATING
A BUSH, JUST BELOW
THAT HOLE!



I SPOTTED
HIM, TOO!
NOW, FOCUS
ON THE OLD
MINE HOLE,
ROY!



GRADUALLY, ROY SEES---A
TALL, SLIM MAN IN DUSTY CLOTHES,
GAZING OUTWARD THROUGH
BINOCULARS.

IT COULD BE OUR MAN, SLIM!
HE'S NARY---GLASSING THE
COUNTRY BEFORE HE SHOWS
HIMSELF---TELL ME! IS THERE
A WAY TO GET CLOSE TO HIM
WITHOUT BEING SEEN?

YUP! THERE IS!



DOWN AT THE BASE OF
THIS BUTTE, THERE'S A
DEEP, NARROW WASH...
IT ANGLES ACROSS
TOWARD THE OTHER
TWIN.

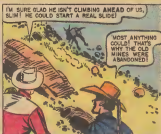
LET'S HOPE THOSE
OTHER MAN HUNTERS
AREN'T USING A GLASS!



AT THAT VERY MOMENT, HOWEVER,
A GUN HUNTER LIFTS POWERFUL
BINOCULARS TO SCAN THE HEIGHTS.

THIS TAKES US
ALMOST TO THE
BASE OF THE
OTHER TWIN---
SLIT FROM
THERE ON, WE'LL
HAVE NO COVER





DR. PRICE! THIS IS SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
ROY ROGERS! YOUR LIFE IS IN DANGER!
WE CAN PROTECT YOU IF WE KNOW
WHERE YOU ARE...



DR. PRICE! STRANGERS ARE COMING UP THE
SLOPE! WE EXPECT TROUBLE! IF YOU HAVE A
FIREARM, IT WOULD HELP...



HALTED BY THE BLACKNESS
OF THE INNER TUNNEL, ROY
MAKES A LAST APPEAL...



...AS SLIM WALKER'S RIFLE SPEAKS A GRIM
WARNING TO THE CLIMBING MEN.



LIKE WELL TRAINED TROOPS THE FOUR
MEN IN BLACKS HUNT COVER...





ANOTHER DROPS HIS GUN
FROM NUMBED FINGERS...
A-142-12411

---AS THE APPROACHING JEEP STOPS, OUT OF RANGE

THAT JEEP WE SAW WAS STOPPED DOWN THERE--- JUST BEYOND THE SLOPE, ROY! SHALL I TRY A LONG SHOT AT IT?

BETTER SAVE YOUR BULLET! IF WE CAN HOLD THESE JEEPERS OFF UNTIL DARK, WE CAN SLIP OUT, WITH DR. PRICE

WE'VE GOT TO FIND YOUR FOXY SCIENTIST FIRST, ROY! SAY! THOSE TWO ARE TAKING SOMETHING OUT OF THE JEEP---



---AND THEY'RE RUNNING--- TO CIRCLE THIS SLOPE! BET THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE A TRY AT US FROM ABOVE, SOMEHOW---

KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN, SLIM---OR THEY'LL BOUNCE LEAD OFF IT!



KEEPING WELL OUT OF DIRECT RANGE FROM THE TUNNEL'S MOUTH, THE TWO JEEPERS CLIMB CAREFULLY, NURSING A WELL-WRAPPED BUNDLE...



---WHILE THE RIFLES ON THE SLOPE BELOW DOUBLE THEIR RATE OF FIRE...

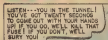
GOT ME ANOTHER MAN'S RIFLE---PLUMB BUSTED THE THING, I RECKON, ROY!

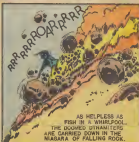
OOOO SHOOTING, SLIM! BUT GUT FOR A MINUTE--- AND LISTEN!

KRANG!

AS THE FIRMS DIES DOWN AGAIN, SLIM SCORES.









INSIDE THE DUST-FILLED TUNNEL, ROY AND SLIM CROUCH AGAINST ONE WALL, DRIVING THEIR HEADS AGAINST THE RAIN OF DIRT AND STONES FROM THE ROOF.

AFTER LONG MINUTES---WHEN THE TERRIBLE THUNDER OF THE ROCKSLIDE HAS PASSED---

WELL, ROY---THEY BURED US---LIKE THEY PROMISED! WE'LL LIVE TILL THE AIR IN THIS OLD MINE GETS TOO STALE TO BREATHE! AND THEN---

YOU'RE A BORN PESSIMIST, SLIM!

THE AIR IN HERE WOULD PROBABLY LAST UNTIL WE HAD DUG THROUGH THE TEN OR TWENTY FEET OF RUSSLE AT THE ENTRANCE... BUT I DON'T THINK WE'LL HAVE TO DO THAT!

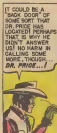


WHAT DO YOU MEAN? HAVE YOU GOT "SECOND SIGHT" THAT SHOWED YOU A BACK DOOR TO THIS MINE---OR SOMETHING?

"---OR SOME-THING! WHEN I WENT BACK IN HERE, CALLING FOR DR. PRICE, I FELT A COOL DRAFT OF AIR!"

IT COULD BE A "BACK DOOR" OF SOME SORT THAT DR. PRICE HAS LOCATED! PERHAPS THAT IS WHY HE DIDN'T ANSWER US! NO HARM IN CALLING SOME MORE, THOUGH... DR. PRICE...!

THERE'S A SIDE STOPE! SEE IF THE AIR CURRENT COMES FROM THERE, SLIM!





NO
DREAMS!

THERE MIGHTN'T BE, ANYHOW---
WITH THE MAIN ENTRANCE PLUGGED,
WE'VE GOT TO GO EASY ON MATCHES.
ROY! LET'S DO SOME MORE CALLING---
IN THE DARK!

AT THE NEXT SIDE STOPE---

DOCTOR PRICE!
ROGERS CALLING!
THE MAIN TUNNEL
IS PLUGGED BY
THE SLIDE! DO
YOU HEAR ME?

DOCTOR
PRI--I--J--GE!
WE'VE GOT ONLY
A FEW MATCHES
LEFT! IF YOU
KNOW A WAY
OUT---



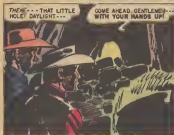
ROY! AM I---
UH---DREAMING?
OR AM I SEEING
YOUR FACE?

YOUR FACE ISN'T
ANYTHING TO DREAM
ABOUT, SLIM--- BUT
THERE'S LIGHT ENOUGH
TO SEE IT--- FROM
SOMEWHERE!



IT'S UP THIS STOPE!
SHINING AROUND A BEND!

YOU'RE RIGHT,
SLIM!



THEH--- THAT LITTLE
HOLE! DAYLIGHT---

COME AHEAD, GENTLEMEN---
WITH YOUR HANDS UP!



DR PRICE! UP THERE BESIDE
THE HOLE! WE CAN'T SEE HIM,
BUT HE CAN SEE US!

YEAH--- BUT
WHY---?



COME FORWARD, SO THAT I CAN STUDY YOUR FACES IN THE LIGHT! I WANT TO BE SURE THAT YOU ARE NOT--- AH--- KIDNAPPERS!



AFTER A LONG, SILENT MOMENT---
ALL RIGHT, DR. PRICE!
ARE YOU SATISFIED?



I AM SATISFIED NOW THAT YOU ARE AN HONEST SHERIFF'S DEPUTY, HERE'S MY HAND!

THANK YOU, DOCTOR! I'M ROY ROGERS AND THIS IS SLIM WALKER, MY FRIEND, WHO FIRST LOCATED YOU.



I AM READY TO GO BACK WITH YOU---TO THE PROTECTION OF THE FBI! I HAVE LEARNED, ROGERS, THAT KEEPING A WANTED SCIENTIST OUT OF THE HANDS OF RED SPIES IS NOT A ONE-MAN JOB!

YOU ALMOST LEARNED IT TOO LATE, DOCTOR!



I'LL SLIP OUTSIDE AND LOOK OVER THE SITUATION THROUGH MY 'SCOPE! COULD BE THAT WE WON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR NIGHT TO HEAD FOR PRISMORPH.

LOOK FOR MY BURRO, TOO, MR. WALKER! I HOPE HE WASN'T CAUGHT IN THE SLIDE!



SLIM WILL DO A THOROUGH JOB OF LOOKING! HE'S A TRAINED DESERT MAN...

I'M SURE OF IT, ROGERS! AND--- ER---IT WASN'T COURAGE THAT KEPT ME FROM JOINING YOUR DEFENSE OF THE TUNNEL...

IT IS SIMPLY THAT I KNOW---
THAT IF I WERE WOUNDED AND
CAPTURED, AND THE ENEMY SHOULD
PICK MY MIND OF CERTAIN SECRETS
---MILLIONS OF PERSONS WOULD
DIE HORRIBLY!

HALF AN HOUR LATER---

HERE COMES SLIM---
WITH GOOD NEWS, TO
JUDGE BY HIS GRIN!

WELL, DOCTOR---I'VE GLASSED MOST EVERYTHING IN
TWENTY MILES, AND THERE'S NO SIGN OF LIFE,
EXCEPT SOME RANGE COWS. OH, YES---AND
YOUR BURRO!

WHAT OF OUR ATTACKERS?

THEY'RE SOMEWHERE UNDER A
RUNAWAY MOUNTAINSIDE THAT
GOT STAMPEDED BY THEIR DYNAMITE!
EVEN THEIR TRUCK IS BURIED! BUT
THE JEEP THAT'S PARKED FARTHER
OFF COULD TAKE YOU AND ROT BACK
TO PRONGHORN, WHILE I LOOK
AFTER OUR HORSES...

LET'S GO, OH, PRICE!
BEFORE ANY MORE
CRUISING "GEM HUNTERS"
SHOW UP TO BOTHER US...

ARE YOU SURE
THEY WON'T
BOTHER SLIM?
HE LOOKS LIKE
ME!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT SLIM! HE'LL MAKE OUT
BETTER ALONE THAN HE WOULD WITH AN
ARMY! JUST SLIM AND HIS HARMONICA!

OH, SLOANNA, DON YOU CRY FOR ME...

ROY ROGERS

KING OF THE COWBOYS

Outlaw's Legacy

A QUIET TONE IN HIS DEPUTY'S VOICE DRAWS SHERIFF BOB MARSH OF LONGHORN COUNTY TO THE WINDOW.

BOB! COME HERE AND TAKE A LOOK! I THINK WE'VE GOT A CALLER!

YEAH? WHAT'S SO UNUSUAL ABOUT THAT, ROY?



GET BEHIND YOUR DESK, BOB, AND TRY TO KEEP YOUR FACE STRAIGHT! HE'S COMING IN AND WE SHOULD LAUGH...THOSE RAGS MAY BE THE ONLY CLOTHES HE'S GOT!

YOU'RE RIGHT, ROY!



HEH...WELL? I'VE GOT A LETTER FOR DEPUTY SHERIFF ROY ROGERS! IS HE—

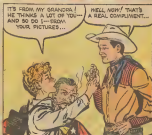
...RIGHT HERE, SON!

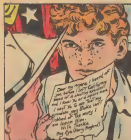
HARRUPH!



IT'S FROM MY GRANDPA! HE THINKS A LOT OF YOU—AND SO DO I—SOMEBODY YOUR PICTURES...

WELL NOW! THAT'S A REAL COMPLIMENT...





Best grandson today, long dying about
off a misery in my inevitable, all I
want you to have all the money I have
got left it is 10 thousand dollars
in Billie all honest money, to bring
happily my wife's from Longhorn
and Hurry IF I am dead it will
find Oklahoma to my wife
Boots, heart out for Ra-bit
Pete he is a drunk and
a sidekick. You
Lovey grandpa





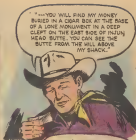






A BURICK FROM OUTSIDE THE WINDOW ANSWERS BOY'S SHOT.







BACK AWAY FROM THE RIM OF THE CLEFT, BULLET DUNES DANGER--- BUT HIS YARRING-BARK DOES NOT CARRY DOWN INTO THE HOLE WHERE BOY AND JOEY ARE DIGGING.

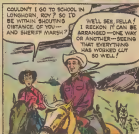






--TO STRIKE WITH A JARRING THUD!





Roy Rogers

KING OF THE COWBOYS

**BULLET TRAILS
A THIEF**

HELLO, THERE, BULLET! DO YOU AND ROY COME TO PAY OLD JOHN FAIRBANK ANOTHER VISIT? MIGHTY GLAD TO SEE YOU, FELLA!



WELL, NOW! I DON'T SEE A SIGN OF ROY! RECKON YOU CAME ALONE TO VISIT ME, BULLET!



YES, SIR! CAME TO SEE ME ALL BY YOURSELF! I TAKE THAT AS A REAL COMPLIMENT--- TO AN OLD MAN WHO HASN'T GOT A THING TO TREAT YOU WITH BUT BEANS AND BISQUITS.



IF YOU'VE COME TO SPEND THE DAY WITH ME, WE'LL GO OUT TO MY CLAIM! YOU CAN WATCH ME PAN OUT SOME MORE GOLD DUST. AND YOU CAN HELP ME CARRY BACK SOME SPRING WATER. COME, DINNERTIME!



I'VE PRETTY NEAR CLEANED OUT THIS POCKET OF FAY DIRT, BULLET... AND I RECKON IT MAY BE MY LAST SEASON TO WORK! OLD RHEUMATIZ IS BAD, AND GETTING WORSE EVERY YEAR. ...



BUT I'VE GOT ENOUGH "DUST" AND MUSKETTS IN THAT CARVED SACK UNDER MY MATTRESS TO KEEP ME THE REST OF MY DAYS! WE'RE TWELVE OR THIRTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH!



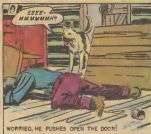
'BOUT TIME FOR DINNAR, PARTNER! I'LL MAKE A BATCH OF THOSE SPECIAL FLAPJACKS YOU LIKE... WITH MOLASSES ON 'EM!



THERE'S MY SAVINGS, PARTNER--- THREE HUNDRED-000 OUNCES OF GOLD! I'M SORRY YOU HAVE TO GO NOW, BUT COME BACK AND SEE ME REAL SOON.



ONE DAY, A WEEK LATER, BULLET GETS NO RESPONSE FROM OLD JOHN, ALTHOUGH HIS NOSE TELLS HIM THAT THE OLD MAN IS AT HOME.



MMMMH MY HEAD... SPLITTING! BULLET, IF YOU'D ONLY BEEN HERE, THAT---THAT CROWDY THIEF WOULDN'T HAVE DARED TO ROB ME---OR HIT ME WITH HIS GUN! MMMMMH---



I GRABBED HIS BANDANA--- TORE IT OFF! SMELL OF THAT, PARTNER! THAT'S THE THIEF! YOU CAN TRACK HIM, MESSEL! TRACK HIM AND BRING BACK MY GOLD! MY GOLD--- SRRRY?





BUT BULLET TAKES THE WORDS SERIOUSLY! MIND A TIME HIS OWN MASTER HAS GIVEN THE COMMAND: "TRACK HIM!" AND THE HOT SCENT OF THE GEMERAL IS IN HIS NOSTRILS NOW!



AND THE COMMAND, "BRING BACK MY GOLD!" IS EQUALLY CLEAR, AS THE BIG POLICE DOG RACES ALONG THE ROBBER'S TRAIL!



ONLY ONCE DOES HE PAUSE---WHERE THE HUMAN TRAIL ENDS, AND FRESH HORSE TRACKS TAKE ITS PLACE! BUT BULLET'S TRAINING HAS BEEN TOO GOOD TO LET THIS BOTHER HIM.



THE SUN GOES DOWN---BUT DARKNESS THAT WOULD STOP A HUMAN TRACKER IS IGNORED BY BULLET, WHO TRAILS BY SCENT.



AN HOUR LATER THE TRAIL ENDS! PEERING CAUTIOUSLY BETWEEN TWO ROCKS, HE SEES---



---THE ROBBER, CAMPED IN A SHELTERED HOLLOW, WHERE HIS TINY CAMPFIRE CANNOT BETRAY HIM.



HIS SUPPER FINISHED, HE CAREFULLY
PUTS OUT HIS FIRE---



---AND PLACES
HIS SADDLE OVER
THE FAMILIAR
GIRL'S BACK.



DRAWING INTO HIS BLANKETS, HE TUCKS HIS
BELT GUN UNDER HIS SADDLE-PILLOW...



---AND SHORTLY HIS HEAVY SNEEZING TELLS
BULLET THE MAN IS ASLEEP! CAREFULLY
THE DOG APPROACHES, AS SILENT AS A WOLF.



SUDDENLY HE STOPS, HIS LIP LIFTING,
IN A SILENT SHARPLE PLUCKER OF
MOVEMENT---A FAINT SMELL OF
CUCUMBERS---WARNS OF ANOTHER
ENEMY.



---A DESERT SIDEWINDER, DEADLIEST OF ALL
THE RATTLESNAKES! SEEING A PLACE TO ESCAPE
THE NIGHT CHILL, THE THING HEADS FOR THE
NEAREST SOURCE OF WARMTH...



---THE ANIMAL HEAT OF THE SLEEPING MAN!



AN INCH AT A TIME, BULLET CRAWLS NEARER, IN HIS MIND THE CLEAR COMMAND OF OLD JOHN: "BRING BACK MY GOLD!"



THE SCENT OF OLD JOHN'S HANDS ASSURES HIM THAT THE GOLD SACK IS THERE--- BUT THE ROBBER'S PISTOL BLOCKS THE WAY TO IT! VERY DELICATELY, BULLET EXTRACTS THE SHUN...



....AND CARRIES IT A FEW YARDS AWAY. TRAINED BY A TWO-GUN ARTIST, BULLET KNOWS HOW DANGEROUS A GUN CAN BE--- IN THE HANDS OF AN ENEMY!



BOLDER, NOW THAT THE THIEF IS DISARMED, BULLET RETURNS...



GETTING AN END OF THE SACK BETWEEN HIS TEETH, HE TUGS---BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS!



A POWERFUL JERK DOES THE TRICK!



AS HE RAISES HIMSELF, THE ROBBER PLANTS HIS HAND HEAVILY ON THE COILED SNAKE--- WHICH STRIKES VICIOUSLY,



WITH A WILD YELL, THE MAN GRABS AT THE REPTILE---



---SIZES-IT BY THE TAIL, AND SHAPE IT LIKE A WHIP, DISLOCATING THE REPTILE'S SPINE!



NOW I'LL GET TADP--- YOU PLAUGED CAMP ROBBER---



AS A FOX SLINGS A HEAVY POWL OVER ITS BACK TO
CARRY IT HOME, BULLET THROWS THE TWENTY-FIVE-
POUND SACK ONTO HIS SHOULDERS



---BACK TO OLD JOHN'S SHACK, WHERE TRIGGER'S WHISTLE GREET'S HIM.



WHEE-HEE-
HEE-UMF

WHEE-HEE-
HEE-UMF

HEAR THAT, JOHNNY TRIGGER
IS TELLING US THAT YOU'VE
GOT ANOTHER VISITOR...



IT COULD
BE YOUR
DOG, ROY!

BULLET! YOU OLD RIDGE-
RUNNER, WHERE'VE YOU
BEENT? I CAME HERE
LOOKING FOR YOU AND
FOUND...



HEY! HE
DID IT,
ROY!

UPPS

HE BROUGHT BACK
MY GUN! HE
TRACKED THAT
ROBBER AND
GOT IT AWAY
FROM HIM,
ROY!

GOOD WORK,
BULLET!



IF I HADN'T BEEN SILLY WITH
THAT BLOW ON THE HEAD, I'D
NEVER HAVE SENT HIM OUT ON
A JOB LIKE THAT, ROY! I'D
HAVE SENT HIM FOR YOU OR
THE SHERIFF!



I'D LIKE
TO KNOW
HOW HE
DID IT!

BUT YOU'VE DONE A LAW-
MAN'S JOB ON MORE THAN
ONE OCCASION, PARTNER! SO
MAYBE OLD JOHN WASN'T SO
CRAZY AFTER ALL WHEN HE
SENT YOU OUT ALONE TO
TRAIL A THIEF!





BIRTHDAY PRESENT

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When dawn broke over the Coreys' log cabin and horse clearing, it meant just another day of work for five of the family. Dad Corey and his elder son, Ransom, had to haul logs for the new barn. Mom and the two small girls, Jane and Rosie, had the calves to milk and the chickens and pigs to feed. Before they went off to the stump lots for a day of wild strawberry picking.

But for Tod Corey there were no chores this morning! It was a special favor—because this was Tod's twelfth birthday. He could spend the chore hour in bed, or out in the woods with Dad's squirrel rifle, or just lingering over his breakfast. . . .

Or he could do just what he was doing—honing the keen edge of his birthday present until it was as sharp as a razor—then stopping to run his hands over the glass-smooth wood of the helve, lovingly. It was the first axe he had ever owned!

The axe blade had just the right flare and thickness. The whole steel head didn't weigh more than two pounds. And the boy-size, hickory helve had just the right balance.

Tod stood up and swung it, to get the "feel." After the big, too heavy, man-size axes he had been trained to use, this one was like something alive in his hands. It would cut through anything! It would strike

within a hair's breadth of where it was aimed—and quicker than the eye could follow!

Tod had gulped down his breakfast, scarcely tasting it. Now, with the new axe in his hand he darted outdoors. A little, misshapen elm had started to grow by the chicken house. Tod lopped off a twig, then a small branch, then the whole stem with one clean blow. A man could carve his name in a log with this axe!

"Dad!" he called, as his father and his brother came out with their axes in their hands. "Let me notch logs with you today! I'd never miss a stroke with THIS axe!"

Dad Corey shook his head. "We'll be hauling most of the time today," he stated. "Besides, your mother needs you—to help with berry picking! You go along with her and the girls!"

Berry picking—a girl's job! Tod sulked, as he trailed after Mom and the "babies," Jane and Rosie. He was carrying two pails, and his new axe. Mom carried a pail and her shotgun. Feeding six mouths on a bush farm, Mom couldn't afford to miss ANY chance!

When they reached the stump lots where the sweet little wild strawberries grew thickly, Tod leaned his new axe beside Mom's gun, against a stump. Then everybody began pick-



ing—fast. Janey crawled in triumph when she had filled her first pail ahead of Rose. Tad picked faster than both the girls together—but Mom was the best of them all.

At dinnertime they didn't stop to boil tea. They washed down their brown bread and butter with spring water, picked up their pails, and moved on to the next patch. There they leaned gun and axe against another stump.

They had been watching for signs of Dad's range cattle—and now they saw some. Fresh tracks! But covering one cow track was the still fresher print of a bear's foot. Old Three Toes! There was no mistaking that defamed pad's mark in the mud!

"I wish I had brought slugs for the shotgun, instead of birdshot!" Mom said when she saw it. "That old bear killed three of our stock this past winter! Not that we're likely to get sight of him today . . ."

They all went back to berry picking. Their pails were almost filled, when they heard the young cow bawl with fright, just beyond the bluff of poplars.

Mom ran for her shotgun. Tad ran for his axe. Not that they really thought they would see that holler in time.

But they did! The lean-razed two-year-old came plunging out of the brush, right toward them—with a shaggy, black monster at her back, clawing at her throat.

Mom forgot about the birdshot loads in her gun. She whipped the heavy, double-barreled weapon to her shoulder and triggered.

The range was close. Enough birdshot got through the bear's thick fur to sting him. With a roar he leaped off the heifer's back—and charged for Mom!

The second barrel blasted—full in Old Three Toes' face. It blinded him—but did not stop him! Mom side-stepped, swung the gun like a club! Quick as a flash Three Toes halted, whirled, pawing for her—and growling horribly. One armed paw caught the shotgun from Mom's hands, and hurled it aside. Another paw caught her apron—

And it was then that Tad's light axe struck fatal! Just where the bear's skull joined his neck the razor-sharp blade bit through, with all the strength of Tad's arms behind it!

Old Three Toes went down. His terrible claws dug deeply into the ground—then relaxed. He was as dead as a bear can be.

Then Tad's knees went wobbly—because he hadn't had time to be scared before. He stumbled over to the stump where Mom had sat down.

All of a sudden he started to laugh.

"Oh, Mom!" he gasped. "I was so mad this morning—when I had to go berry picking with you and the babies! But I'm sure GLAD NOW!"



CHUCKWAGON CHARLEY'S TALES



ABOUT MIDNIGHT ---







"DEL SAID WE COULDN'T LOSE! HE'D BEEN TOLD HOW TO FIND A VALLEY SO RICH IN FUR THAT YOU'D HAVE TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT!"



"THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS THAT THE PLACE HAD BEEN UNLUCKY FOR TRAPPERS! THE LAST MAN TO TRY IT FOUND TWO SKELETONS LYING WITH THEIR RUSTED BUNS AND GEAR

"HE SAID THAT HE HIMSELF WAS TRAILED BY A THING HE CALLED A GHOST CAT! HE LEFT THE VALLEY BEFORE THE SEASON WAS WELL BEGUN — — —"

"... AND DEL ADAMS GOT THE STORY FROM HIM! DEL DON'T BELIEVE IN 'GHOST CATS' BUT HE DID BELIEVE IN THE GOOD TRAPPING TO BE FOUND IN 'HAUNTED VALLEY'."



"SO THAT'S HOW DEL AND I FOUND OURSELVES THERE, ONE LATE FALL DAY, WITH OUR THREE HORSES AND OUR CAMP GUFFEL."



"WE BUILT OURSELVES A TEMPORARY BUSH SHELTER, NEAR THE LITTLE CREEK

"--- AND WENT OUT TOGETHER TO LAY
OUT OUR TRAP LINES . "



" BUT WHEN WE GOT BACK TO CAMP --- "



" ALL THE STUFF THAT THE SKUNK-BEAR
HAD MESSED UP WAS SPOILED BY HIS
AWFUL SMELL . "



" WE CLEANED UP THE PLACE AND THREW
AWAY THE SPOILED GUFF



" AFTER A SUPPER OF DEER MEAT AND
BISCUITS, WE TURNED IN TO SLEEP



"BUT WE DIDN'T GET TO SLEEP AT ALL
THAT NIGHT!"

"WHAT--- IN THE
NAME OF REASON---
IS THAT?"

"SOUNDS LIKE A
CATAMOUNT---
LYNX!"



"THE CRITTER DIDN'T LEAVE ALL NIGHT!
JUST BEFORE SUNUP WE HEARD ITS YOWLING
CRY FADING AWAY TOWARD THE NORTHEAST."

"THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THAT CRITTER'S
SCREAMS THAT MADE THE SHORT HAIRS
RISE ON THE BACK OF A MAN'S NECK."

"IT SOUNDS ANGRY---
AND LIKE A WOMAN
IN PAIN, TOO,
CHARLEY!"

"IT'S YOUR 'GHOST
CAT', DEL! IT'S
CIRCLING US!"



"AFTER BREAKFAST I WAS READY TO GO---
PLUMB SICK OF CAMP AFTER THE NIGHT WE'D
HAD! BUT DEL FELT DIFFERENTLY---"

"IT'S GOING AWAY, CHARLEY! IT'S
SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T
LIKE THE DAYLIGHT---

"MERR-BELLON"
SEE TARRR--



"WELL--- LET'S START OUT
AND FINISH THAT
TRAPLINE, DEL!"

"NOT ME,
CHARLEY!"



"MY OWN NERVES WERE ON EDGE, AND I
RECKON I WAS A BIT SHORT WITH DEL! A
MAN ALL BROKEN DOWN WITH FEAR ISN'T
A PRETTY PICTURE TO LOOK AT!"

"DID YOU EVER
HAVE A--- A PREMONITION,
CHARLEY? A HUNCH THAT SOME
THING AWFUL WAS SURE AND
CERTAIN TO HAPPEN TO YOU?"
"WELL--- I'VE GOT THAT FEELING
NOW! AND I'M NOT LEAVING
HERE TODAY!"



"SUIT YOURSELF,
DEL! WELL I'M
GOING OUT ON
THAT TRAP-
LINE! THAT'S
WHERE THE
WOLVERINE WILL
HEAD FOR TO
RUN OUR TRAPS
IF I KNOW HIS
BREED! MAYBE
I'LL GET A
SHOT AT
HIM---

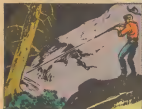




"I LEFT WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, OR A BACKWARD LOOK* BUT IF I'D BEEN ABLE TO LOOK AHEAD ANOTHER EIGHT OR TEN HOURS, I'D NEVER HAVE TAKEN TWO STEPS AWAY FROM CAMP."



"I'D BEEN RIGHT ABOUT THAT WOLVERINE'D COME STRAIGHT FROM RAISING OUR DUffel TO OUR TRAPLINE, PROBABLY FOLLOWING OUR TRACKS! I FOUND TWO BEAVER, PULLED OUT OF THE WATER AND MAULED."



"I TRACKED THE CUSS, AND GOT ONE QUICK SHOT AT HIM---BUT MISSED* BY THAT TIME, THE SUN WAS GETTING LOW."



"I GOT BACK TO OUR CLEARING AT DUSK, AND CALLED OUT TO MY PARTNER, SO HE WOULDN'T SHOOT ME FOR A CATAMOUNT!"



"BUT MY PARTNER WOULD NEVER SHOOT AT ANYTHING AGAIN* I FOUND HIM CRUMPLED ON THE GROUND BY THE HALF-DEAD FIRE."



"SOME BIG ANIMAL OF THE CAT TRIBE HAD JUMPED HIM FROM BEHIND, AS HE HUNKERED BESIDE THE FIRE, PROBABLY DOING IT HAD BROKEN HIS NECK AND BUNK ITS TEETH IN HIS THROAT."

"I TOOK A VOW RIGHT THEN AND THERE---NOT TO LEAVE THE VALLEY TILL I HAD KILLED THE MURDEROUS BEAST---OR BEEN KILLED MYSELF!



"I WAS SORE AT HEART--- AND MAG CLEAR THROUGHT" I BARED THE GHOST CAT TO JUMP ME, AS I CUT FIREWOOD AT THE DARK EDGE OF THE WOODS



"I BROILED A CHUNK OF DEER MEAT TO KEEP UP MY STRENGTH---BECAUSE I AIMED TO SIT UP ALL NIGHT AND WATCH FOR THE CRITTER!



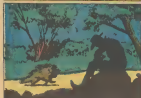
"I DIDN'T BELIEVE THE CAT-MOUNT WAS SO MUCH GHOSTLY AS JUST FLAIR VISIONS" IT WAS PROBABLY A COUGAR---THOUGH COUGARS ARE ALMOST NEVER KNOWN TO ATTACK MAN!



"MAYBE SOME HUNTER HAD KILLED THE CAT'S KITTENS, AND TURNED HER MAN-HATER, OR MAYBE IT WAS AN OLD-TOM, GONE KILLING-CRAZY! I AIMED TO FIND OUT" I ROLLED A BIG STONE FOR A SEAT, AND TRIED TO KEEP AWAKE



"BUT GOING WITHOUT SLEEP THE NIGHT BEFORE MADE STAYING AWAKE TOO HARD! AROUND MIDNIGHT I MUST HAVE DROVE OFF--- AND NEVER NOTICED A PORCUPINE THAT WADDLED PAST ME---



"--- TO CHEW ON THE SALTY-TASTING LEATHER OF MY SADDLE.



"I NEVER SAW THE GHOST CAT* STALKING ME AROUND THE END OF THE SHELTER, WHERE THE SHADOW LAY BLACK!"



"MY FIRST WARNING WAS AN UNHEALTHY SCREAM! THE CATAMOUNT HAD BEEN CONCENTRATING ON ME SO CLOSELY THAT SHE HAD STEPPED ONTO THAT PORCUPINE IN THE SHADOW---- AND GOT A DOSE OF QUILLS FROM ITS LIGHTNING-QUICK TAIL!"

SCAR-
REE-
OWWWW



"I CAME UP OFF THE STONE WITH MY SIX-GUN TALKING! I EMPTIED IT INTO THAT GRAY KILLER----



"---BEFORE I REALIZED THAT SHE WAS DEAD! AND NOT ANY COUGAR AT ALL, BUT AN OUTSIDE BOBCAT* A CANADA LYNX, THAT WOULD WEIGH MAYBE EIGHTY OR NINETY POUNDS."

HOW WAS THAT
---GULP!---
ALL OF THE
STORY, CHARLEY?"

DID YOU CLEAR OUT OF
THE VALLEY NEXT DAY?"

NOPE! RECKON I
WAS JUST PLAIN
STUBBORN!



ANYHOW I BURIED MY PARTNER, AND HUNTED
DOWN THAT OLD WOLVERINE, AND TRAPPED
OUT THE SEASON IN THE VALLEY* MADE A LOT
OF MONEY, TOO* BUT ONE SEASON WAS ENOUGH

AFTER DEL'S
DEATH THE
VALLEY
COULD NEVER
BE THE SAME
AGAIN, YOU
SEE!



CHIQUITA

Bret Harte 1883



Beautiful! Sir, you may say so. Thar isn't her match in the country,
Is thar, old gal,—Chiquita, my darling, my beauty?
Feel of that neck, sir,—thar's velvet! Whoa! Steady,—ah, will you, you vixen!
Whoa! I say, Jack, trot her out, let the gentlemen look at her paces.

Morgan—She ain't nothin' else, and I've got the papers to prove it.
Sired by Chippewa Chief, and twelve hundred dollars won't buy her.
Briggs of Tuolumne owned her. Did you know Briggs of Tuolumne?—
Busted himself in White Plains, and blew out his brains in Frisco?

Hadn't no savvy—had Briggs, Thar, Jack! that'll do,—quit that foolin'!
Nothin' to what she kin do, when she's got her work cut out before her.
Horses is horses, you know, and likewise, too, jockeys is jockeys,
And 'tain't ev'ry man as can ride as knows what a boss has got in him.

Know the old ford on the Fork, that nearly got Flanagan's leaders?
Nasty in daylight, you bet, and a mighty rough ford in low water!
Well, it ain't six weeks ago that me and the Jedge and his nephew
Struck for that ford in the night, in the rain and the water all round us;

Up to our flanks in the gulch, and Rattlesnake Creek just a babb',
Not a plank left in the dam, and nary a bridge on the river.
I had the grey, and the Jedge had his roan, and his nephew, Chiquita;
And past us trundled the rocks just loosed from the top of the cañon.

Lickity, lickity, switch, we came to the ford, and Chiquita
Bucked right down to her work, and afore I could yell to her rider,
Took water just at the ford, and there was the Jedge and me standing,
And twelve hundred dollars of horse-flesh afloat and driftin' to thunder!

Would ye believe it? That night that boss, that ar' filly, Chiquita,
Walked herself into her stall, and stood there, all quiet and dripping,
Clean as a heaver or rat, with nary a buckle of harness,
Just as she roam the Fork,—that boss, that ar' filly, Chiquita.

That's what I call a boss! and— What did you say!—oh, the nephew?
Drowned, I reckon,—leastways, he never came back to deny it.
Ye see the damned fool had no wit,—ye couldn't have made him a rider;
And then, ye know, boys will be boys, and horses—well, horses is horses!

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